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C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 000587

SIPDIS

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Classified By: Political Economic Counselor Andrew C. Mann for reasons

¶1. (C) SUMMARY: In a July 1 letter to parliament, FM Verhagen described Dutch efforts to promote democracy in Zimbabwe. In a July 8 telcon with poloff, Dutch MFA Zimbabwe desk officer Melle Leemstra expressed support for further sanctions and U.S. action at the UN, and critiqued the French approach. END SUMMARY.

¶2. (U) FM VERHAGEN: The FM wrote to parliament that the African region "should take the lead" in responding to the situation in Zimbabwe, but he also wants the international community to cooperate to end tyranny there. The EU should adopt "smart sanctions" that affect the regime but not the population. Verhagen intends to look at restricting visas of Zimbabwean delegations to UN institutions. The Netherlands is considering additional food aid for Zimbabwe, following a five million euro donation to the World Food Programme earlier this year. The Dutch will continue to provide financial, moral and political support to human rights and democracy activists.

¶3. (C) NEXT STEPS: Following up on the FM's letter, Leemstra thought the international community was sending a good, strong message. The Dutch hope South Africa's diplomatic efforts will succeed, but "share the anxiety" of international partners about the risks. Mugabe may try for a "marginal solution" by bringing opposition members into the government, or simply buying off opposition members in the parliament. Leemstra noted that Bert Koenders, GONL Minister for Development Cooperation, is concerned that Tsingirai's proposal to keep Mugabe in a ministerial role, as part of a transition government, would create a new constitutional process that Mugabe could co-opt. Leemstra added that there was also a risk that Tsingirai could "give away too much too soon as he's done in the past." Leemstra hopes the mandate of the South African Development Community (SADC), to focus on a transition, will keep international attention focused on Zimbabwe.

¶4. (C) U.S. ACTION AT THE UN: The Dutch appreciate U.S. efforts in moving forward at the UNSC. The effort to shift the dialogue from human rights to peace and security is helpful. The Dutch would support a UN special envoy for Zimbabwe to work with President Mbeki.

¶5. (C) CRITIQUE OF FRANCE: Leemstra said France is unable or unwilling to move ahead on new economic sanctions at the EU level. Zimbabwe is on the agenda of the GAERC, but France is only looking at "tweaking" the current sanctions regime by adding names or narrowing the exceptions clauses. FM Kouchner has made helpful comments, but the French bureaucracy is "being cautious." This is "regrettable," as there is room for additional measures to target the regime without hurting the average Zimbabwean. Gallagher